



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY)

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

12 DECEMBER 2008

KEY ISSUE

The Committee is invited to note the progress that Waverley Borough Council has made in delivering the Air Quality Action Plan. This follows confirmation of the Borough Council's allocation of an additional capital budget of £20,000 in the current (2008/09) financial year following the 12th September Committee meeting. The Committee is also invited to note the progress made by Surrey County Council on its role in the Action Plan delivery.

SUMMARY

Waverley Borough Council has produced its Air Quality Action Plan to demonstrate how exceedences of air quality standards are being tackled in Farnham, Godalming and Hindhead. The plan has now received a boost from Waverley of £20,000 to assist immediate delivery of small-scale measures in the current financial year. The report also outlines additional capital bids made by both Waverley Borough Council and by Surrey County Council for 2009-10 to support both the Action Plan delivery and associated activity. The Action Plan has now been seen and accepted by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to support the proposals as well as endorse the proposed programme of expenditure and invite officers from Waverley Borough and Surrey County Councils to present the Committee with a further update of progress in March 2009. This update will take the form of a draft progress report on the Action Plan, which must be submitted annually to DEFRA at the end of April.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Arising from the Environment Act 1995, Waverley, as a Borough Council, has a legal duty to monitor levels of local air pollution. Where pollutants exceed the objectives set by the Government, Waverley must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and then produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to show how it is addressing the air quality issues within the AQMA. Air pollution exceedences were identified in specified parts of Farnham, Godalming and Hindhead and as a result, Waverley designated these areas and an Air Quality Action Plan received Full Council approval in July 2008. This report has been received and accepted by Defra.
- 1.2 Waverley Borough Council has since allocated £20,000 in capital funding to support delivery of immediate measures to address air quality in 2008-09. This report outlines the proposed expenditure of this funding, together with details of proposed capital bids to support air quality improvements by both Surrey and Waverley in 2009-10.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The Regional Transport Board (RTB) gave low priority to the A31 Hickley's Corner Underpass Major Scheme due to the scheme's low score for policy compatibility. This led to requests for a holistic approach to be adopted over the transport problems and schemes previously identified in Farnham so that a structured approach could be taken towards the development of a town centre transport strategy. The aim is to avoid piecemeal implementation of uncoordinated schemes. Surrey County Council commissioned a desk study review that resulted in the identification of a number of strategy options for packages of measures that could be implemented individually or sequentially developing from low to high impact. The higher impact options require major sums of money and cannot be funded in total through the local programme. It is very unlikely that a major scheme bid would be successful given the current RTB policy framework. Funding from the local programme or development contributions may enable some elements of the packages of measures to be implemented earlier. The County and Borough Councils are committed to finding a suitable solution at the earliest opportunity provided that the funding is available.
- 2.2 Members indicated at the previous meeting that they wish to see a number of such small-scale options to assist delivery of the air quality goals in the Air Quality Management Areas. Funding totalling £20,000 allocated by Waverley Borough Council will help support these measures in the current financial year. In addition Surrey County Council is also implementing certain small-scale measures.
- 2.3 Options currently being delivered by both Councils are outlined in section 3, alongside measures for which capital funding is being sought by both Councils in 2009-10.

3 OPTIONS

3.1 Advisory signage:

- Cut engine – cut pollution signs: road signs with this message are being looked at as a possible solution; however, further work is required to assess the feasibility from both a legal and technical perspective.
- Other signage: In addition, Surrey County Council has agreed to assist with the installation of specially designed signs encouraging people not to leave their engines idling and to take action to reduce their own impact on air quality, at a number of locations within the Farnham AQMA.
- The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Farnham has indicated it wishes to act as a community partner to help develop a strong design that could be used for these signs and as part of a campaign that would be used in newspaper advertising, on streets, on Waverley's website and in the Council's own literature. The messages would form the basis of a sustainable travel publicity campaign that can be expanded in future years to encompass other areas where air quality is important.
- Production of both sets of road signs, and the UCA signs would account for expenditure totalling £12,000 to £15,000 in the current financial year.

3.2 Travel plans for major employers:

- Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council have their own travel plans. Waverley has recently introduced several initiatives to expand its own travel plan.
- These include a Green Travel Week, a bid in its own 2009/10 Capital Programme to purchase two pool cars, car parking spaces allocated for car sharers, membership of Surrey Car Share and consideration of salary sacrifice schemes for bike purchase.
- A baseline survey of staff travel to work habits will help measure the delivery of travel plan initiatives.
- In 2009-10 Waverley will seek to take forward a travel plan forum with major employers, in partnership with Surrey County Council's development related travel plan network, particularly in the air quality management areas in order to share best practice and promote greener travel. This will also support the goals of Waverley's "Don't Lose Your Business / Home" campaign.

3.3 Freight Quality Partnership:

- Air quality problems in central Farnham are in part associated with road freight movements – either as a result of lorries parking and causing bottlenecks or due to the overall level of road freight passing through the centre.
- The County Council recognises that a balance needs to be struck between the economic benefits of freight vehicles and their impact on the environment. As a highways authority, the County Council has some limited powers to regulate their movements, but also has a role to manage freight through information and voluntary agreements.
- The Department for Transport (DfT) advocates Freight Quality Partnerships (FQPs), comprising councils, businesses, freight operators and supply chains identifying suitable freight routes and ensuring they are used by freight vehicles.

- The County Council will make a bid for circa £20,000 to finance FQPs. This is to identify, design and implement freight routes. The promotion and publication of the routes together with encouragement to use them is also part of the process.
- The County Councils current emphasis is in the north and north west of Surrey including Waverley and Guildford.
- To complement the County Council's funding mentioned above, a capital bid of £20,000 has been made in Waverley Borough Council's 2009-10 budget to support further overall implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan, including £5,000 towards establishing a Freight Quality Partnership. This would bring together relevant partners to help deliver a more sustainable freight transport system and therefore reduce congestion and air pollution associated with freight delivery.

3.4 Improved car parking signage and management in Farnham:

- The possibility of developing a variable messaging signing system about availability of car parks in Farnham has been researched. The purpose of such a system would be to provide motorists entering the town with up to date information on location and occupancy (number of spaces) of car parks to reduce traffic circling the town unnecessarily.
- It would involve installing vehicle counting devices to count vehicles in and out at town centre car parks, a local computer which would continuously calculate the number of spaces at each car park and a number of driver information signs, which would display the information on-street. This is likely to cost some £200,000 plus maintenance, and consequently will not be pursued at this stage.
- In the current financial year officers will implement improved signage to direct drivers to existing long-stay car parks, St James' and Riverside to encourage appropriate town centre users to access these facilities rather than driving through the Air Quality Management Area,
- The provision of improved local car-parking information boards in the town's car parks is also under consideration.

It is anticipated that the cost of these final two proposals can be met from Waverley's existing parking-related budgets.

3.5 Awareness-raising with local schools:

Potters Gate School in the central Farnham area has expressed an interest in developing an air quality pilot schools programme with Waverley Borough Council. This will expend some of the balance of the approved £20,000 in the current financial year. This relationship is likely to involve:

- Community air quality monitoring schemes with a local school
- A visit by a member of Waverley Borough Council's Environmental Health team to talk about air quality issues
- The engagement of local pupils in projects to raise awareness of air quality.

3.6 Section 106 agreements:

In order to deliver air quality improvements in the Air Quality Management Areas, Surrey County Council will continue to work closely with the Borough

Council on agreeing measures to support sustainable travel measures where developments are in or close to an Air Quality Management Area.

3.7 A review of the Flambard Way / Ockford Road Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system:

Surrey County Council is currently installing a new communications system for the management of the Ockford Road/ Flambard Way network, the location of the Godalming AQMA. Once this up-graded system is in place Surrey will undertake an efficiency review to ensure that the SCOOT (Split Cycle and Offset Optimisation Technique) UTC system is performing as efficiently as possible.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 There are no consultation responses specifically required. However, consultation on joint working with schools, local businesses and Farnham Town Council will assist with the implementation of the AQAP.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are potential resource implications for the County Council associated with the responsibilities set out in sections 3.3 and 3.6 onwards.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no specific implications.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Traffic-related matters are prominent amongst those concerns raised by Waverley residents in relation to community safety. Measures designed to improve air quality are also likely to improve overall quality of life in those parts of Waverley that are most affected.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to support the proposals set out in section 3 of this report.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed measures will have an impact on quality of life in Waverley and relate to certain County Council services.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 Officers will take forward the outlined proposals and report back to the committee with a progress report in March 2009.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Draft Air Quality Action Plan: full documentation available at www.waverley.gov.uk/airquality